

WHAT IS CLAIMED:

1. A storage system comprising:

a plurality of stackable storage containers arranged in a vertical stack, each of the containers comprising:

(i) a drawer having a bottom wall and a peripheral wall defining a storage space for receiving articles and an upwardly facing opening for accessing the storage space,

(ii) a drawer housing having at least an upper wall, the drawer being slidably mounted to the drawer housing for movement between (a) a retracted position wherein the drawer is positioned beneath the upper wall and (b) an extended position wherein the drawer is moved outwardly from beneath the upper wall, thereby allowing access to the storage space therein through the upwardly facing opening, the drawer housing being constructed to enable at least the upper wall of the drawer housing to be pivoted between (a) a closed position closing the upwardly facing opening of the drawer in its retracted position and (b) an open position uncovering the upwardly facing opening of the drawer in its retracted position,

(iii) at least one upper coupling on an upper portion of the storage container and at least one lower coupling on a lower portion of the storage container, and

(iv) a carrying handle for enabling the user to carry the storage container;

the upper and lower couplings of each container being constructed such that, for each pair of vertically adjacent storage containers in the stack, (a) the upper coupling of a lower storage container of the pair is engaged in an interlocked relation with the lower coupling of an upper storage container of the pair to secure the storage containers of the pair together, and (b) the upper and lower couplings of the vertically adjacent storage containers of the pair can be disengaged to enable separation of the storage containers of the pair.

2. A storage system according to claim 1, wherein the plurality of storage containers includes three or more storage containers.

3. A storage system according to claim 1, wherein each storage container further comprises a latch, the latch being movable between (a) a latching position releasably latching the drawer in the retracted position thereof, and (b) a released position enabling the drawer to be moved to the extended position thereof.

4. A storage system according to claim 3, wherein the latch on each storage container in the latching position thereof also releasably latches the upper wall in the closed position thereof, and in the released position thereof enables the upper wall to be moved to the open position thereof.

5. A storage system according to claim 4, wherein the latch on each storage container is slidably mounted on a front face of the drawer for lateral movement between the latched and released positions thereof.

6. A storage system according to claim 5, wherein the upper wall on the drawer housing of each storage container has a front edge with (a) a latch engaging portion having a lip protruding upwardly therefrom and (b) a recess adjacent the latch engaging portion, the recess being positioned such that, when the drawer is in the retracted position thereof and the upper wall is in the closed position thereof, the latch in its released position is received in the recess, and then can be moved laterally onto the latch engaging portion and the lip thereof to affect the latched position thereof.

7. A storage system according to claim 1, wherein the drawer housing of each storage container has a pair of side walls extending downwardly from the upper wall on opposing sides of the drawer.

8. A storage system according to claim 7, wherein the upper wall and the side walls of the drawer housing of each storage container are fixed together so that the side walls are pivoted along with the upper wall between the open and closed positions thereof.

9. A storage system according to claim 8, wherein in each storage container the drawer includes a pair of pivot pins extending from opposing sides thereof and the side walls of the drawer housing include a pair of inwardly facing tracks, the pivot pins being slidably and pivotably received in the tracks to enable (a) the upper wall and the side

walls to be pivoted about the pivot pins between the open and closed positions of the upper wall, and (b) the drawer to be moved between the retracted and extended positions with the pivot pins riding within the tracks.

10. A storage system according to claim 9, wherein in each storage container each side wall of the drawer housing includes a support flange extending inwardly adjacent a front end of the drawer housing and wherein the drawer has a pair of support ridges extending on each side thereof, the support ridges being supported by the support flanges to support the drawer as it moves between the retracted and extended positions thereof.

11. A storage system according to claim 10, wherein in each storage container the support flanges are deflectable for clearing the support ridges as the upper wall and side walls are pivoted to the open position.

12. A storage system according to claim 4, wherein in each storage container the carrying handle is connected to a front wall of the drawer for facilitating movement of the drawer between the retracted and extended positions thereof.

13. A storage system according to claim 1, wherein in each storage container the at least one lower coupling includes a hook and the at least one upper coupling includes a receptacle, and wherein the hooks and receptacles are constructed such that, for each pair of vertically adjacent storage containers in the stack, (a) the hook of an upper storage container of the pair is engaged in an interlocked relation with the receptacle of the lower storage container of the pair to secure the storage containers of the pair together, and (b) the hook and receptacle of the vertically adjacent storage containers of the pair can be disengaged to enable separation of the storage containers of the pair.

14. A storage system according to claim 7, wherein in each storage container the at least one lower coupling includes a hook and the at least one upper coupling includes a receptacle, and wherein the hooks and receptacles are constructed such that, for each pair of vertically adjacent storage containers in the stack, (a) the hook of an upper storage container of the pair is engaged in an interlocked relation with the receptacle of the lower storage container of the pair to secure the storage containers of the pair together, and

(b) the hook and receptacle of the vertically adjacent storage containers of the pair can be disengaged to enable separation of the storage containers of the pair.

15. A storage system according to claim 14, wherein in each storage container the hook includes a plurality of hooks provided on lower portions of the side walls and the receptacle includes a corresponding plurality of receptacles provided on upper portion of the side walls.

16. A storage system according to claim 15, wherein in each storage container the upper portions of the side walls each include recessed wells and wherein the receptacles are located within the recessed wells.

17. A storage container for stacking together with one or more similar storage containers, the storage container comprising:

a drawer having a bottom wall and a peripheral wall defining a storage space for receiving articles and an upwardly facing opening for accessing the storage space,

a drawer housing having at least an upper wall, the drawer being slidably mounted to the drawer housing for movement between (a) a retracted position wherein the drawer is positioned beneath the upper wall and (b) an extended position wherein the drawer is moved outwardly from beneath the upper wall, thereby allowing access to the storage space therein through the upwardly facing opening, the drawer housing being constructed to enable at least the upper wall of the drawer housing to be pivoted between (a) a closed position closing the upwardly facing opening of the drawer in its retracted position and (b) an open position uncovering the upwardly facing opening of the drawer in its retracted position,

at least one upper coupling on an upper portion of the storage container and at least one lower coupling on a lower portion of the storage container;

the upper coupling being constructed to be (a) engaged in an interlocked relation with a lower coupling of a similar storage container stacked atop the storage container to thereby secure the storage container and the similar storage container stacked atop thereof together, and (b) disengaged from the lower coupling of the similar storage container stacked atop the storage container, thereby allowing the storage container and the similar storage container stacked atop the storage container to be separated;

the lower coupling being constructed to be (a) engaged in an interlocked relation with an upper coupling of a similar storage container stacked below the storage

container to thereby secure the storage container and the similar storage container stacked below the storage container together, and (b) disengaged from the upper coupling of the similar storage container stacked below the storage container, thereby allowing the storage container and the similar storage container to be separated; and

a carrying handle for enabling a user to carry the storage container.

17. A storage container according to claim 16, wherein further comprises a latch, the latch being movable between (a) a latching position releasably latching the drawer in the retracted position thereof, and (b) a released position enabling the drawer to be moved to the extended position thereof.

18. A storage container according to claim 17, wherein the latch in the latching position thereof also releasably latches the upper wall in the closed position thereof, and in the released position thereof enables the upper wall to be moved to the open position thereof.

19. A storage container according to claim 18, wherein the latch is slidably mounted on a front face of the drawer for lateral movement between the latched and released positions thereof.

20. A storage container according to claim 19, wherein the upper wall on the drawer housing has a front edge with (a) a latch engaging portion having a lip protruding upwardly therefrom and (b) a recess adjacent the latch engaging portion, the recess being positioned such that, when the drawer is in the retracted position thereof and the upper wall is in the closed position thereof, the latch in its released position is received in the recess, and then can be moved laterally onto the latch engaging portion and the lip thereof to affect the latched position thereof.

21. A storage container according to claim 16, wherein the drawer housing has a pair of side walls extending downwardly from the upper wall on opposing sides of the drawer.

22. A storage container according to claim 21, wherein the upper wall and the side walls of the drawer housing are fixed together so that the side walls are pivoted along with the upper wall between the open and closed positions thereof.

23. A storage container according to claim 22, wherein the drawer includes a pair of pivot pins extending from opposing sides thereof and the side walls of the drawer housing include a pair of inwardly facing tracks, the pivot pins being slidably and pivotably received in the tracks to enable (a) the upper wall and the side walls to be pivoted about the pivot pins between the open and closed positions of the upper wall, and (b) the drawer to be moved between the retracted and extended positions with the pivot pins riding within the tracks.

24. A storage container according to claim 23, wherein each side wall of the drawer housing includes a support flange extending inwardly adjacent a front end of the drawer housing and wherein the drawer has a pair of support ridges extending on each side thereof, the support ridges being supported by the support flanges to support the drawer as it moves between the retracted and extended positions thereof.

25. A storage container according to claim 24, wherein the support flanges are deflectable for clearing the support ridges as the upper wall and side walls are pivoted to the open position.

26. A storage container according to claim 18, wherein the carrying handle is connected to a front wall of the drawer for facilitating movement of the drawer between the retracted and extended positions thereof.

27. A storage container according to claim 16, wherein the at least one lower coupling includes a hook and the at least one upper coupling includes a receptacle,

the receptacle being constructed to be (a) engaged in an interlocked relation with a hook of a similar storage container stacked atop the storage container to thereby secure the storage container and the similar storage container stacked atop thereof together, and (b) disengaged from the hook of the similar storage container stacked atop the storage container, thereby allowing the storage container and the similar storage container stacked atop the storage container to be separated;

the hook being constructed to be (a) engaged in an interlocked relation with a receptacle of a similar storage container stacked below the storage container to thereby secure the storage container and the similar storage container stacked below the storage container together, and (b) disengaged from the receptacle of the similar storage container stacked below the storage container, thereby allowing the storage container and the similar storage container to be separated.

28. A storage container according to claim 21, wherein the at least one lower coupling includes a hook and the at least one upper coupling includes a receptacle,

the receptacle being constructed to be (a) engaged in an interlocked relation with a hook of a similar storage container stacked atop the storage container to thereby secure the storage container and the similar storage container stacked atop thereof together, and (b) disengaged from the hook of the similar storage container stacked atop the storage container, thereby allowing the storage container and the similar storage container stacked atop the storage container to be separated;

the hook being constructed to be (a) engaged in an interlocked relation with a receptacle of a similar storage container stacked below the storage container to thereby secure the storage container and the similar storage container stacked below the storage container together, and (b) disengaged from the receptacle of the similar storage container stacked below the storage container, thereby allowing the storage container and the similar storage container to be separated.

29. A storage container according to claim 28, wherein the hook includes a plurality of hooks and the receptacle includes a corresponding plurality of receptacles.

30. A storage container according to claim 29, wherein the upper portions of the side walls each include recessed wells and wherein the receptacles are located within the recessed wells.